



State of New Hampshire
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health Services



West Nile Virus in Dogs and Cats

Can West Nile virus cause illness in dogs or cats?

West Nile virus has been isolated from cats and dogs. Most dogs or cats infected with the West Nile virus fully recover from the infection. There is no specific therapy, but in more severe cases, supportive treatment may be indicated.

Can infected dogs or cats be carriers and transmitters of West Nile virus to humans?

Infected mosquitoes transmit West Nile virus. There is no documented evidence of animal-to-animal or animal-to-person transmission of West Nile virus. Veterinarians should take normal infection control precautions when caring for an animal suspected of having this or any other viral infection.

How do dogs or cats become infected with West Nile virus?

Dogs and cats become infected the same way humans become infected: by the bite of an infected mosquito.

Can a dog or cat infected with West Nile virus infect other dogs or cats?

No. There is no documented evidence that West Nile virus is transmitted from animal to animal.

How long can a dog or cat be infected with West Nile virus?

The answer is not known at this time.

Should a dog or cat infected with West Nile virus be euthanized? What is the treatment for an animal infected with West Nile virus?

There is no reason to euthanize an animal infected with West Nile virus. Full recovery from the infection is likely. Treatment would be supportive and consistent with standard veterinary practices for animals infected with a viral agent.

**For veterinary questions about West Nile virus, contact
the State Veterinarian's office, (603) 271-2404.**

**For more information, call the
New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services,
West Nile Virus Information Line, at 1-866-273-NILE (6453).**

For health care providers with clinical questions or to report human suspect or probable cases, please contact the NH Communicable Disease Control Section at 1-800-852-3345 ext. 4496.